

AMENDED CLAIMS

Claims 1 – 23 (cancelled).

Claim 24 (currently amended): A connector for joining a hollow anatomical structure to another hollow anatomical structure, said connector comprising:

a first annular rigid body with an inner surface conformed reciprocally to an outer surface surrounding a wall-opening of a first hollow anatomical structure, said annular rigid body provided with first holding means that in open configuration are inserted into said wall-opening of said first hollow structure without distorting its shape, said first holding means capable of being transformed by effecting means in a closed configuration in which said first holding means press said first hollow structure towards said inner surface of said first annular body thus affixing said first hollow structure to said first annular body, wherein coupling of the affixed first annular body to a second annular rigid body affixed to a second hollow structure forms a fluid-proof surface encircling the abutted edges of the wall-openings of the approximated first and second hollow structures.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The connector in Claim 24, wherein said connector further comprising coupling means for joining in a fluid-proof union said first annular body with said second annular body.

Claim 26 (currently amended): The connector in Claim 25, wherein said connector further comprising means for preventing axial displacement of first anatomical structure affixed to said first annular body.

Claim 27 (previously presented): The connector in Claim 25, wherein said inner fluid-proof surface further comprising a porous layer into which bodily tissues can grow in.

Claim 28 (currently amended): A connector for joining a hollow anatomical structure to another hollow structure, said connector comprising:

(a) a fluid-proof surface formed by a union of a first annular rigid body with a second annular rigid body, said first annular body with an inner surface conformed to an outer surface surrounding a wall-opening of a first hollow ~~anatomical~~ structure, and said second annular body with an inner surface conformed to an outer surface surrounding a wall-opening of a second hollow structure, said fluid-proof surface enclosing said first hollow structure and second hollow structures abutted with edges of their wall-openings;

(b) first holding means that in an opened configuration are inserted into said wall-opening of said first hollow ~~anatomical~~ structure without distorting its shape, said first holding means capable of being transformed by effecting means to a closed configuration in which said first holding means press said first hollow structure towards said inner surface of said first annular body thus affixing said first hollow structure to said fluid-proof surface of said connector; and

(c) second holding means capable of keeping said second hollow structure affixed to said inner fluid-proof surface of said connector.

Claim 29 (previously presented): The connector in Claim 28, wherein said first annular body and said second annular body are consolidated in a seamless union.

Claim 30 (previously presented): The connector in Claim 29, wherein said connector further comprising means for preventing axial displacement of at least one of the affixed hollow structures.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The connector in Claim 29, wherein said fluid-proof surface further comprising a porous layer into which bodily tissues can grow in.

Claim 32 (previously presented): The connector in Claim 28, wherein said connector further comprising coupling means for joining said first annular body with said second annular body in a fluid-proof union.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The connector in Claim 32, wherein said connector further comprising means for preventing axial displacement of at least one of the affixed hollow structures.

Claim 34 (previously presented): The union connector in Claim 32, wherein said fluid-proof surface further comprising a porous layer into which bodily tissues can grow in.

Claim 35 (currently amended): A union connector for joining a hollow anatomical structure to another hollow structure, said connector comprising:

(a) an annular rigid body with an inner fluid-proof surface conformed to enclose outer surfaces of a first hollow ~~anatomical~~ structure and a second hollow ~~anatomical~~ structure abutted with cut-edges of their wall-openings;

(b) first holding means that in an opened configuration are inserted into the wall-opening of said first hollow ~~anatomical~~ structure, said first holding means capable of being transformed by effecting means to a closed configuration in which said first holding means press said first hollow structure towards said fluid-proof surface of said annular rigid body thus keeping said first hollow structure affixed to said connector; and

(c) second holding means capable of keeping said second hollow structure affixed to said inner fluid-proof surface of said union connector.

Claim 36 (previously presented): The union connector in Claim 35, wherein said fluid-proof surface is formed by a union of a first annular rigid body with a second annular rigid body, said first annular body with an inner surface conformed to an outer surface around a wall-opening of said first hollow structure, and said second annular body with an inner surface conformed to an outer surface around a wall-opening of said second hollow structure.

Claim 37 (previously presented): The union connector in Claim 36, wherein said first annular body and said second annular body are consolidated in a seamless union.

Claim 38 (previously presented): The union connector in Claim 37, wherein said connector further comprising means for preventing axial displacement of at least one of the adjoined hollow structures.

Claim 39 (previously presented): The union connector in Claim 37, wherein said fluid-proof surface further comprising a porous layer into which bodily tissues can grow in.

Claim 40 (previously presented): The union connector in Claim 36, wherein said connector further comprising coupling means for joining said first annular body with said second annular body in a fluid-proof union.

Claim 41 (previously presented): The union connector in Claim 40, wherein said connector further comprising means for preventing axial displacement of at least one of the adjoined hollow structures.

Claim 42 (previously presented): The union connector in Claim 40, wherein said fluid-proof surface further comprising a porous layer into which bodily tissues can grow in.

Claim 43 (currently amended): A method for joining a hollow anatomical structure to another hollow structure, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a first connector with a first annular rigid body with an inner surface conformed to surround an outer surface of a wall-opening of a first hollow anatomical structure;

(b) attaching said first annular body to said first hollow structure by first holding means that in an open configuration are inserted into said wall-opening of said first hollow structure and then by effecting means said first holding means are transformed in a second configuration in which they press said first hollow structure toward said first annular body this affixing said first hollow structure to said first annular body; and

(c) joining in a union said first annular body of said first connector with a second annular rigid body of a second connector attached to a second hollow

structure and forming a fluid-proof surface that surrounds the abutted cut-edges of the wall openings of approximated first and second hollow structures.

Claim 44 (previously presented): The method for joining of Claim 43, wherein said step of attaching said first annular body to said first hollow structure further comprising the step of growing of bodily tissues into said fluid-proof surface of said first annular body.

Claim 45 (currently amended): A method for joining two hollow anatomical structures, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a union connector comprising an annular rigid body with an inner fluid-proof surface predefined to surround outer surfaces of a first hollow anatomical structure and a second hollow structure abutted with cut-edges of their wall-openings;

(b) attaching said union connector to said first hollow structure by first holding means that in an open configuration are inserted into said first hollow structure and then by effecting means are transformed in a second configuration in which said holding means press said first hollow structure towards said fluid-proof surface thus affixing said first hollow structure to said union connector; and

(c) attaching said union connector to said second hollow structure by second holding means keeping said second hollow structure affixed to said annular body in a manner that said inner fluid-proof surface of said connector encloses the abutted cut-edges of the approximated first and second hollow structures.

Claim 46 (previously presented): The method for joining of Claim 45, wherein said steps of attaching said first and second hollow structures to said fluid-proof surface of said annular body further comprising the step of growing of bodily tissues into said fluid-proof surface of said connector.